

**Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of
Parks, Recreation and Conservation
Minutes of April 21, 2005 at Meadowedge, West Sayville**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ray Corwin Member at Large
Matthew Kruger Vice Chairman, Town of Smithtown
Alexander McKay Chairman, Town of Huntington
Richard F. White, Jr. Trustee, Town of East Hampton
Aurelio Colina Trustee, Town of Southampton
Joseph Miller Trustee, Town of Islip
Todd Stebbins Member of the Board

ABSENT:

Charles Bender Member of the Board
John Fritz Trustee, Town of Babylon
Gary Olsen Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Christopher C. Drake Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Thomas J. McCaffery Trustee, Town of Southold
Vacancy Trustee, Town of Riverhead

PARKS DEPARTMENT:

Ronald F. Foley Commissioner
Tracey Bellone Deputy Commissioner
Colleen Hofmeister Contracts Manager
Rich Hollborn Superintendent of Parks
Tom Hroncich Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator
Nick Gibbons Sr. Environmental Analyst

GUESTS:

Thomas Isles Director of Planning
Jennifer Kohn Assistant County Attorney

PUBLIC PORTION:

There were no persons present for the public portion of the meeting.

ADOPTION OF March 17, 2005 MINUTES:

The minutes were amended as follows:

Page 2 – Under Adoption of the February 17th amendments, Chairman McKay changed the word “arose” to “arisen” in the last paragraph.

Page 3 – First paragraph, the end of the 3rd sentence changed from “... other sites could be parks credits” to “other sites could generate credits”.

Page 3 – First paragraph, the in the last sentence “TR” was changed to “TDR”.

Page 3 – Under the section Real Estate “Route” was added before “25” and “454”.

Page 3 – In the 3rd paragraph, the sentence “They will be contacting the Pine Barrens, as it is in the Pine Barrens core – open space” was stricken from the minutes.

Page 4 – Under Commissioner’s Report, South Haven Stables, the sentence beginning “The county now has to review all...” was changed to “The county now has to review the situations...”

Page 4 – Under Golf Courses, the in the last sentence “Privately run Bergen Point...” was changed to read “Privately managed Bergen Point...”

Page 6 – Under Smith point East Booth, the words “is complete” was added to the first sentence to make it read “the camper check-in station on the east end of the park is now complete.”

Page 8 – the last bullet point was stricken from the text.

All members present motioned to approve the minutes as amended.

During the review of the minutes from last months’ meeting, in the Commissioner’s Report under Golf Courses, Trustee Colina asked the question of the necessity for reviews of Timber Point Golf Course when it just had a \$1.5 million face lift and the ground levels were raised. The Commissioner replied that all golf courses are reviewed prior to opening for the season. This had nothing to do with drainage, but rather the weather was questionable that week with rain and snow and we had to make sure it was ready to open.

Tom Isles, Planning Department Tom reported that there were no new acquisitions to report since the last meeting. He handed out a Save Open Space Bond Act Workforce Housing TDR Plan to the Trustees. The County Executive is looking into using County’s Yaphank property for sports, recreation, entertainment, work force housing. The process has begun, RFI’s have gone out and the plan is on schedule to have a proposal by year’s end. We’ve mapped out all capital projects; projected future use anticipated the need for county facilities: facility space will be doubled and temporary leases may be possible. Trustee Colina mentioned past proposals for golf courses on this property and asked if there is there any chance of that happening at this time. Tom replied that they are not anticipated but it is too soon to say for sure. The County Executive is leaning towards the County uses mentioned above but is open to looking at all possible uses. The Commissioner commented that perhaps interest in golf is waning or that needs are currently being met by a satisfactory number of existing golf courses. He thought perhaps we should take a new look at the demand and whether or not we should use funds and space for more golf courses. Trustee Krueger suggested the possible need to look at demand for golf in general or demand for golf at specific times of day. Chairman McKay asked if there were going to be public hearings on this. Tom Isles replied that the County Executive said there will be 3 public hearings to enhance that part of the process. At this time Chairman McKay wanted to thank and congratulate Tom and the Town of Huntington for their work on the acquisition of Camelot Property in Huntington.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT:

Smith Point - The East Booth contractor was fired. Jim Barr and our maintenance division have taken over the project and we hope to have it opened by Memorial Day. At the Pavilion, work is being done to renovate and update the bathroom facilities. Erosion: the 3,500 (yards) of sand put in to protect Burma Road has already eroded away along with a section of the road. During high tide the road is impassable. He stated that it’s too soon to tell if the outer beach will be all or partially accessible for the summer and will be meeting with DPW on Monday to consider our options. Chairman McKay wanted to express that he had received a call from Trustee Fritz commending the Parks Department for responding so well and promptly to the erosion situation. He expressed his gratitude for all of the man-hours and work put in to resolve the problem.

The Commissioner continued that Tom Hroncich secured a \$15,000 grant for the construction of

the Smith Point fishing pier. Federal review of our application still has not commenced the thirty-day public review requirement.

Under cash handling, the Commissioner reported that a new audit team is to be hired within 30 days including an auditor, sr. auditor and sr. accountant.

The Commissioner said that we are still working with Seatuck regarding the Scully Mansion and its designation as the Suffolk County Environmental Interpretive Center. There is \$2 million in funding for the center. Trustee Miller asked what the delay is on the Seatuck contract and why not give it back to the Legislature to have them assist with the contract. The Commissioner responded that there is no delay, only the working out of fine details and he is okay that Parks is responsible for the contract. Deputy Commissioner Bellone also mentioned that Historic Services is trying to get Scully listed with the National Historic Register and that will determine how construction is done at the site.

Regarding Southaven Stables the Commissioner reported that the county received three proposals to operate the stables and that he decided to reject all three because they didn't have the right combination of financial strength and experience necessary to successfully operate the deteriorated facility. The County Executive held a meeting where people attended from the horse community in support of reopening the facility. As a result of that meeting the County Executive proposed and the Legislature approved a resolution to make available \$525,000 to complete an engineering analysis of the building and to repair or reconstruct the building to comply with today's codes given the intended use. Upon completion of the engineering analysis, it is the department's intent to draft a new RFP which will combine the county funds with those of a private operator. SCDPW is currently working to engage a consultant for the analysis.

A Press Conference was held this morning announcing the transfer of 12 new employees to the Parks Department through the water quality protection fund. These employees will be part of the environmental division and will help oversee and clean all of our parks property and open space acquisitions. They are currently stationed at Blydenburg and Southaven County Park.

Longwood Youth Soccer is looking to use a portion of Cathedral Pines Park for soccer fields. School districts seem to be getting larger and need their fields so leagues are looking for alternative field space. We are trying to strike a balance between that issue and our natural environments.

Trap and Skeet - the RFP's are available to be picked up. As of today four have been picked up. Respondents have until May 25th to respond.

Coindre Hall – It looks like there is the possibility of the town investing money for the boathouse restoration . The town was planning on building a facility next door. We are trying to work together to use town and county funds to renovate the existing boathouse.

Sears Bellows – we went out to bid for that stable again. We have received 2 bids which will go before the evaluation committee in the coming weeks.

Montauk – the county is considering building a maintenance facility at the GATR site. We think this is a good location.

Brush Fires – with the dry conditions there is a warning about brush fires. So far we have had two, one at Southaven County Park near the expressway and one in Gardner County Park.

Indian Island – Maintenance Center project. The relocation of the fuel tanks is moving ahead.

There were some local protests by constituents and local officials when they saw the construction near Riverside Drive. The question turned to whether we had received all necessary approval including Board of Trustee approval. I read the charter and I didn't find any requirement to go before the Trustees. The County is satisfied that all the necessary reviews have been done. There will be no increase in traffic and the natural environment will not be affected.

Further discussion included:

Trustee Miller asked a question regarding the lack of grease traps at Cupsogue Beach. He said that he heard there are no grease traps at the Beach Hut and that we have to pump the cesspools frequently because of this. Rich Hollborn and Colleen Hofmeister said they haven't heard any complaints and that they just had a joint meeting with the staff from the Beach Hut and field operations and this did not come up. They will look into it further.

It was asked if it would be possible to expand the camping area at Smith Point behind the dunes. The Commissioner replied that it would be a difficult place to organize campers due to erosion concerns and environmental considerations.

Trustee Colina asked Colleen if Fred Marsillio was working up to standard in regards to his concessions at Cupsogue. She replied that Fred Marsillio is one of her better concessionaires and that we are pleased with his performance. He goes out of his way to do more than he is asked.

Chairman's Report - Chairman McKay began by restating the message of gratitude from Trustee Fritz and thanked Trustee McCaffery for his work with the Peconic Dunes Advisory Board.

The Village of Greenport is interested in selling some of its waterfront property. This was from an article and a story on News 12. Chairman McKay asked Tom Isles if the county would be interested. Tom Isles said that the county hasn't been contacted but they would be interested in discussing this.

Froehlich Farm – Chairman McKay asked if the broken down building on the property can be taken down. The Commissioner replied that it cannot be taken down because it is an historic building, although there are no funds to restore it.

Open Questions:

Nick Gibbons asked if there was any news on the EMT tower at Theodore Roosevelt County Park. The Commissioner said that nothing has been done yet.

Trustee Stebbins asked for an update on the new reservation software system. Deputy Commissioner Bellone replied that the Information Technology department is trying to find the best way to connect software and that we are working on a hardware list. Once that is done we will go to bid. The current contract expires at the end of this year and we are hoping to do training with the new system this fall. We are also working with the Executive Technology Unit to determine if the green key cards could serve as debit cards. Deputy Commissioner Bellone has also been in contact with Nassau County to see if we could combine services because we will both be using the same software.

Trustee Colina brought up the Villa Maria Bay Front property which is for sale for \$25 million and is currently owned by the Dominican Nuns. He asked if it would be possible to combine efforts for a matching funds program to preserve it because they can't donate it due to poverty. There are currently two nuns who live there full time and others stay on a short term basis. He also mentioned it is a very unique house dating back from the 1800's, purchased 60-70 years ago and

it is strictly a convent and the nuns can't afford to run it now. In the past volunteers and a show house program have been used to raise funds and update interiors.

Trustee White stated that it is possible to have joint funding from State, County and Town. He suggested getting the Peconic Land Trust involved for attention to the situation and Trustee Stebbins suggested contacting Michael Deering as well. Tom Isles said it would most likely be a parks acquisition, not an environmental one. Chairman McKay added that the Open Space Committee is putting together a "wish list" which could be another possibility.

Chairman McKay asked Nick Gibbons how the Plovers were doing to which he replied that they are doing well, especially because the erosion has given them free roam and they are only disturbed by natural predators.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Thursday, May 19th at 12:00 p.m. at Indian Island Golf Course in Riverhead.